

Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C.

In the Matter of:	)	
	)	
Comment Sought on 2010 Review of	)	WT Docket No. 10-254
Hearing Aid Compatibility Regulations	)	

**APPENDIX B**

**From:** Richard Reed [<mailto:reedsongs@aol.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 07, 2011 10:59 AM  
**To:** Lise Hamlin  
**Subject:** HLAA cell phone survey

While considering a new cell phone & plan, I recently tried shopping in-person, on-line and, yes, via cell phone. In stores and kiosks, upon being asked about HA and T ratings for their devices, salesperson after salesperson gave a blank stare of "Huh?". Overall, searching for signs of in-person HL enlightenment felt like something out of a science fiction movie: the phones are smart, seemingly quite a bit smarter than their manufacturers and service providers.

Can't help but think that a big- if not the biggest- problem is the ancient 20th century stigma/perception of HL as an old person's "dilemma". US cell phone manufacturers and service providers seem so concerned with out-hipping each other, they risk missing-out on thirty-five million possible customers with hearing loss. Question for their CFOs: how cool is that?

Many cell salespersons wear Bluetooth phones that look somewhat similar to modern HL devices. When I pointed to my ear and said "I use a cochlear implant", more than two salesmen thought it was a competitor's new phone. Talk about a reception problem!

Three for three: I wasn't allowed to try the phones I was interested in. Mostly, people tried to sell me the latest new semi-intelligent gadget; and said I could try it at home and return it if not completely satisfied...

But don't try this at home:

Finding HL information at cell provider sites on-line is an exercise in frustration. HA & T ratings are in the finest print, buried behind virtual reams of hipster marketing. Search any provider web site for "hearing-loss compatible phones". The results are mishmash of confusing generalizations mostly aimed at folks with good biologic hearing. And you don't get to hold the phone- see how it feels next to your ears- on-line. In real stores, I was at least able to hold some brand new dead phones up to my head.

What to do? I called 611...

The initial customer service rep at my current cell phone provider, T-Mobile, was very considerate. After bouncing my call twice to other reps, we finally found one whose HL knowledge and experience added-up to, "You can return any phone within 14 days if you're not 100% satisfied..." To borrow a closed caption from Homer Simpson: "Doh!"

The bottom line: I haven't changed plans, didn't upgrade my Nokia phone- rated M3- which works okay in most places, hums loudly in others, and looks like it lost a fight with a snowplow. As long as it keeps working, I'll take my time researching all options. I feel lucky to be able to use a phone at all thanks to my CI, only wish the process of finding compatible phones were less convoluted. Thanks for your help in that regard.

Warm regards from the land of pot-holes the size of Rhode Island,  
Richard Reed